

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 00399 261545Z
ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3847
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GUATAMALA CITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT
AMCONSUL BELIZE CITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 0399

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, JM, BH
SUBJECT: JAMAICAN COLUMNIST SAYS US IMPEDES BELIZE'S INDEPENDENCE

1. THE DAILY NEWS OF JANUARY 24 CARRIED A LENGTHY COLUMN
OVER THE NAME OF ITS EDITOR, CANUTE JAMES, IN WHICH THE
UNITED STATES IS BLAMED FOR DELAYING THE GRANT OF INDE-
PENDENCE TO BELIZE. ACCORDING TO JAMES, THE UNITED STATES
OPPOSES THE INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE OUT OF FEAR THAT IT
WILL LEAD TO GUATEMALAN INTERVENTION. SINCE THE UNITED
STATES FINDS THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF GUATAMALA TO ITS
TASTE, IT DOES NOT WANT TO BE FACED WITH THE DILEMMA WHICH
WOULD BE CREATED BY A GUATEMALAN INVASION OF BELIZE
FOLLOWING THE GRANT OF INDEPENDENCE. IT IS ALSO THE
FEAR OF THE UNITED STATES, SAYS JAMES, THAT SUCH A
CONFLICT COULD LEAD TO CUBAN INTERVENTION. AND HE
ADDS THAT THE UNITED STATES FEARS THAT AN INDEPEN-
DENT BELIZE WILL JOIN OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE CARIB-
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BEAN TO TAKE STANDS -- AND ACTIONS - INIMICAL THE THE UNITED STATES.

2. COMMENT: JAMES HAS RECENTLY TAKEN OVER AS EDITOR
OF THE DAILY NEWS BUT HAS BEEN WITH THE PAPER SINCE
IT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1973. THE PAPER SUPPORTS THE
PRESENT GOVERNMENT -- ALTHOUGH WITH OCCASIONAL LAPSES
INTO CRITICISM -- IT CAN GENERALLY BE COUNTED ON

TO MIRROR GOJ THIRD WORLD, NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY ATTITUDES. IN THE CURRENT INSTANCE, JAMES APPEARS TO HAVE WORKED HARD TO FIND A STORY WHICH WILL LET HIM WRITE CRITICALLY ABOUT THE UNITED STATES AND REMIND HIS READERS OF THE FALL OF THE ARBENZ REGIME (AND OF THE BAY OF PIGS AND THE OUSTER OF ALLENDE).

3. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY HOWEVER, JAMES' COLUMN, WITH SOME DISTORTIONS, REFLECTS OFFICIAL JAMAICAN VIEW THAT GUATEMALA PROBLEM COULD BE NEUTRALIZED AND BELIZE COULD THUS BECOME INDEPENDENT IF THE U.S. USED THE LEVERAGE IT HAS IN GUATEMALA CITY. THIS THEME IS CONSTANTLY REPEATED BY SENIOR GOJ OFFICIALS WHO INCREASINGLY CITE BELIZE AS A LOOMING CRITICAL ISSUE IN THE CARIBBEAN. A COMMON TWIST HERE IS THAT, IF THE U.S. DOES NOT ACT TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT BELIZEAN INDEPENDENCE, THE CUBANS ULTIMATELY WILL TO THE DETRIMENT OF ALL CONCERNED PARTIES.
GERARD

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